Claims

1. A method for creating and accessing a menu for audio
    content stored in a storage means (S), the content
    consisting of audio tracks, and the menu containing
    representations of said audio tracks, **characterized in**
    -   classifying (CL) the audio tracks into groups, or
        clusters (C1,…,C3) wherein said classification is
        performed according to characteristic parameters of
        said audio tracks;
    -   selecting (R) automatically an audio track being a
        representative for the cluster, wherein said selection
        is performed according to characteristic parameters of
        said audio track and of the other audio tracks of said
        cluster;
    -   generating (X) as said representation a reproducible
        audio extract from said representative audio track; and
    -   associating said audio extract to a menu list (T).

2. Method according to claim 1, wherein said characteristic
    parameters used for classification of audio content
    comprise one or more audio descriptors, the audio
    descriptors being either physical features, or perceptual
    features, or psychological or social features of the
    audio content.

3. Method according to any of claims 1-2, wherein an audio
    track can be classified into more than one cluster
    (C1,…,C3).

4. Method according to any of claims 1-3, wherein the audio
    tracks within a cluster (C1,…,C3) have variable order, so
    that the user listens to a randomly selected track when

12

having selected a cluster (C1,…,C3), with said track
belonging to said cluster.

5. Method according to any of claims 1-4, wherein a user can
   modify the result of automatic classification of audio
   tracks.

6. Method according to any of claims 1-5, wherein a user can
   modify the classification rules for automatic
   classification of audio tracks.

7. Method according to any of claims 1-6, wherein the actual
   audio data are clustered within said storage means (S)
   according to said menu.

8. Method according to any of claims 1-7, wherein the audio
   extract is a sample from the audio track, or an audio
   sequence being synthesized from the actual audio track.

9. Method according to any of claims 1-8, wherein audio
   extracts are created additionally for audio tracks not
   being representatives of clusters.

10. Method according to any of claims 1-9, wherein the length
    of audio extracts is not predetermined.

11. Method according to any of claims 1-10, wherein one of
    said clusters has no representative track.

12. Method according to any of claims 1-11, wherein said menu
    is hierarchical, such that a cluster may contain one or
    more subclusters.

13

13. Method according to any of claims 1-12, wherein the classification rules are modified automatically if a defined precondition is detected, and a reclassification may be performed.

14. Method according to claim 13, wherein said precondition comprises that the difference between the number of tracks in a cluster and the number of tracks in another cluster reaches a maximum limit value.

15. Method according to claim 13, wherein said precondition comprises that all stored tracks were classified into one cluster, and the total number of tracks reaches a maximum limit value.

16. An apparatus for creating or accessing a menu for audio content stored on a storage means (S), the content consisting of audio tracks, and the menu containing representations of audio tracks, **characterized by**
   - means for automatically classifying (CL) the audio tracks into groups, or clusters (C1,…,C3) wherein said classification is performed according to characteristic parameters of said audio tracks;
   - means for automatically selecting (R) an audio track being a representative for the cluster, wherein said selection is performed according to characteristic parameters of said audio track and of the other audio tracks of said cluster;
   - means for generating (X) a reproducible audio extract from said representative audio track; and
   - means for associating said audio extract to a menu list (T).

14

17. Apparatus according to claim 16, further characterized by
   - means for selecting and reproducing a first audio representation from a first cluster;
   - means for a first user input (M,SU,SD), the input controlling whether the cluster associated with the currently selected audio thumbnail is selected or not; and
   - means for a second user input (M,SU,SD), the input controlling whether another cluster is selected or not.

18. Apparatus according to any of claims 16 or 17, further characterized in that an audio track of the selected cluster is read from said storage means (S) for playback.